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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**June 11, 2008**

### **Overview of federal disaster assistance**

INDIANAPOLIS – Many Hoosiers impacted by recent severe storms and flooding in Indiana are asking about the state's federal disaster recovery status. Here is some basic information about the types of assistance the federal government may provide and what the state's status is as of June 11.

#### **Overview**

Governor Mitch Daniels has signed three executive orders and sent a letter to President Bush and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Edward Schafer

**Executive Order 08-09** (June 6) declared a disaster emergency for 41 counties with known destroyed and damaged properties caused by tornadoes and other severe storms from May 30 to June 4. A disaster declaration is one step needed to request assistance from the federal government.

**Executive Order 08-10** (June 7) declared a disaster emergency for 10 counties because of severe damage to properties caused by severe storms that caused flooding and related issues on June 7.

**Executive Order 08-11** (June 7) added 13 counties to the previous disaster declaration. The governor sent a letter to President Bush on June 8 to request that an expedited disaster be declared for 44 Indiana counties. An expedited request allows a state to request a decision from the President without first completing all preliminary damage assessments. Early on June 9, the President gave approval for immediate emergency protective measures in 29 counties.

The governor sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on June 9 requesting that 44 counties be declared major disasters because of damage to crops and loss or significant harm to livestock because of storms that began on May 30.

Daniels has said that the state may declare disasters for other counties.

#### **Direct Federal Assistance**

**Status:** Indiana has requested assistance for 44 counties and received approval for Direct Federal Assistance in 29 counties.

**What Direct Federal Assistance means:** Direct Federal Assistance covers food, water and other consumable commodities, and other emergency protective measures, including installation of generators, installation of large plastic sheet roofing and shoring or demolition of unsafe structures. Addresses immediate emergency needs.

## **Individual Assistance**

**Status:** Indiana has requested individual assistance for 44 counties. Joint preliminary damage assessments by the state, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) have been completed for Marion and Hancock as well as Bartholomew, Johnson, Monroe, Morgan, Rush, Vermillion and Vigo counties and the state is awaiting a response from the President. Damage assessments are in progress in Brown, Daviess, Greene, Henry, Knox, Owen, Shelby and Sullivan. The next counties to be assessed will be Clay, Gibson, Jackson and Sullivan, and others will follow after the peak of the flood reaches communities or the flood waters have receded enough to assess damage. The assessment is done in phases to expedite the approval processes. By breaking the assessment into phases, initial approval by the President for individual assistance could begin in days, instead of weeks, and subsequently approved counties will be quickly added to the list on a rolling basis. **NOTE:** Counties on this list will change and will be updated.

**What Individual Assistance means:** Individual assistance provides financial assistance to households for rent, repairs, replacement of home and personal goods up to a maximum of \$28,800 per household. FEMA aid is designed to complement rather than replace private insurance, so any claims paid by private companies will be taken into account in the determination of a FEMA grant. However, people may apply for FEMA aid while awaiting the adjudication of any private insurance claims they have made. In addition to the individual assistance grants, FEMA works with the SBA to help victims obtain personal loans, up to \$200,000 for households for the repair and/or replacement of homes and personal goods. Business owners can also apply for loans up to \$1.5 million.

If the President approves Individual Assistance, people in the approved counties will be able to apply for assistance through FEMA, either on the phone or Internet.

FEMA will then begin setting up Disaster Recovery Centers, which will include FEMA, other federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service and SBA, Red Cross, and representatives of state agencies that provide services affected people will need. This may include the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Insurance, and the Family and Social Services Administration. In addition, FEMA will bring four mobile units to the state to supplement the centers.

## **Public Assistance**

**Status:** Indiana has requested public assistance for 44 counties. The state will work with local entities to compile damage assessments to forward to federal officials for their review. This is a longer-term process.

**What this means:** Public assistance provides federal aid to local governments and certain nonprofit organizations for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities and infrastructure. If public assistance is granted, the federal government funds 75 percent of damage costs granted and local governments are expected to provide a 25 percent match.

## **Agriculture Assistance**

**Status:** Indiana has requested that the USDA declare 44 counties major disaster counties and has asked Indiana's USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) to expedite its damage assessment process. Because of this request, it is important for farmers in affected areas to report damage to their local FSA offices as soon as possible.

**What this means:** USDA disaster declaration makes farmers in those counties and contiguous counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the USDA FSA. It may also make them eligible for additional federal assistance that may be created.

Find the latest storm damage information: <http://www.in.gov/gov/3725.htm>

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